

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 9-11 will have been amended and claims 1-8 and 12-20 will have been canceled.

In view of the herein contained amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of each of the outstanding rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action, together with an indication of the allowability of all of the claims pending in the present application.

Applicant initially notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 9-11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In the Official Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3-6, 15, and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,615,409 to FORSSEN et al., in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,815,116 to DUNBRIDGE et al., further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,649,290 to WANG, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,566,355 to KANAI; rejected claims 12-14 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over FORSSEN et al., in view of DUNBRIDGE et al., further in view of WANG, and further in view of KANAI as noted above and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,978,657 to SUZUKI; and has rejected claims 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over FORSSEN et al., in view of DUNBRIDGE et al., further in view of WANG, and further in view of KANAI as noted above and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,167,286 to WARD.

Applicant respectfully traverses and asserts that these rejections are inappropriate.

Nevertheless, in order to expedite prosecution in the present application, Applicant has canceled claims 1-8 and 12-20 and rewritten objected to claim 9 into independent form. However, Applicant respectfully asserts that the cancellation of claims 1-8 and 12-20 should not be considered a surrender of the subject matter contained therein.

Additionally, minor amendments have been made to claims 9-11 in order to make these claims more consistent. In these amendments, Applicant has made changes to the language of the claim to render the same more self consistent, as well as more fully in compliance with U.S. syntax, idiom and grammar. These amendments do not change the scope of the claims but are merely cosmetic changes that give rise to no file wrapper estoppel.

For at least the reason that the Examiner has indicated, that the subject matter of claim 9 rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims would be allowable, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 9 is allowable.

With regard to dependent claims 10 and 11, Applicant asserts that they are allowable on their own merit and at least because they depend on independent claim 9, which Applicant submits has been shown to be allowable.

In view of the fact that none of the art of record, whether considered alone or in any proper combination, discloses or suggests the present invention as defined by the pending claims, and in further view of the above remarks, reconsideration of the Examiner's action and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested and are believed to be appropriate.

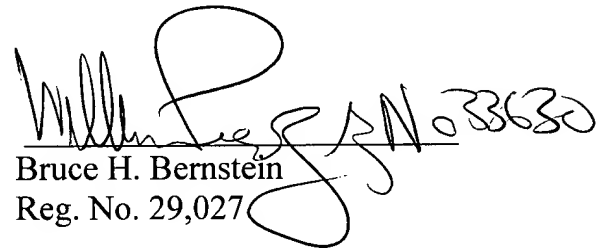
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicant has made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believes that he has now done so.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this response or the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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